

A Goodbye Gift
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FADE IN:

Move-in toward the closed front door of a two-story home in a middle-class suburban area.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

CONTINUOUS:

DENISE, 40's, widow, standing in the kitchen. She's dressed as a typical housewife still wearing her wedding ring.

She is peering down at the counter. Close in on a note.

From GREG:

"My love for you will never die."

The note is sitting next to a well-wrapped gift with a liquor bottle next to it. DENISE gently smiles as she walks away holding back tears.

As she walks we see more notes from GREG.

DENISE gets a call from TINA on her cell phone. It rings once and she rushes to answer it.

DENISE

Hello. How are you?

TINA

I'm good, girl. It rang literally once.

DENISE

That's great. I have been looking forward to your call all morning.

TINA

(exasperated)

I ran into Charles today!

(beat)

The one that cheated and tried to cover it up.

DENISE

(small)

You never had proof.

TINA

Texts at 2 AM is all the proof I needed.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TINA (CONT'D)

(beat)

He acted like he didn't see me,
but I know he did.

DENISE

Did you cut to him?

TINA

Sure did, I cut off that stupid
pencil mustache. Seriously, I
flashed my new wedding ring and
glared.

DENISE

I still can't believe this time
last year you were going to marry
him.

TINA

I know right.

DENISE goes silent and slowly closes her eyes.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - IMAGINATION

DENISE'S demeanor changes abruptly to total rage.

DENISE

(intensely angry)

I want to stomp on his lungs and
make him feel what its like to be
cheated on.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - BACK TO THE PRESENT

DENISE opens her eyes.

DENISE

(small)

Don't you think it would have been
better not have proof?

TINA

Aww, girl, I got to go. My next
client is here.

DENISE

Bye love.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

DENISE walks over to the bottle next to the gift and picks both up before heading up the stairs.

INT. STAIRS TO PLAYROOM - DAY

DENISE walks slowly up the stairs.

INT. SECOND FLOOR PLAYROOM - DAY

Sitting down upstairs in her son AVERY'S playroom in one of two chairs facing each other. She places the gift under her chair. On a small table between is a bottle of whiskey which she uses to fill a glass before she finishes the doorbell rings.

INT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

DENISE answers the door. WILLIAM hands DENISE a yellow bouquet of flowers.

WILLIAM

I'm so sorry for your loss.

DENISE takes the flowers.

DENISE

It wasn't a loss. I cherished the time with him. We gained so much from him.

WILLIAM

I understand.

DENISE

We have packed up the first floor, do you mind if we talk upstairs?

WILLIAM

Sure. No problem. I hope you have an elevator because I don't do stairs though.

DENISE

We can sit at the bar downstairs.

WILLIAM

I'm joking, upstairs is fine.

DENISE awkwardly shrugs and they walk upstairs.

INT. SECOND FLOOR PLAYROOM - DAY

DENISE and WILLIAM sit and DENISE gestures at the drink for WILLIAM.

WILLIAM
No thank you. I have been sober
for three years.

DENISE
I know pastor, it's non-alcoholic.

WILLIAM is reluctant but takes a small sip.

WILLIAM
The weather has been amazing the
last few days.

DENISE
I hadn't noticed.

WILLIAM awkwardly fidgets in chair.

WILLIAM
How's the little guy doing.

DENISE
He's great.

WILLIAM
That's good.

DENISE
Yep. Pretty good for a five year
old whose lost his self proclaimed
best dad ever.

WILLIAM can't seem to climb out of the pit he's digging.

WILLIAM
As a pastor, I meet with people
all the time. I'm happy to help
talk through things.

DENISE disengages and looks out the window.

DENISE
How about that weather?

WILLIAM
Yep it's a beautiful day. So what
brings us here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DENISE

Over the past few months since...

Beat

DENISE (CONT'D)

Greg has left love notes for me.

WILLIAM

Sounds romantic.

DENISE

You have no idea.

(beat)

He was always so disarming, I'll never find someone to love me like him.

DENISE gets choked up a little.

DENISE (CONT'D)

During this time, he has somehow arraigned for gifts to be distributed to friends and family.

WILLIAM

(confused)

I hadn't spoken with Greg in years. I didn't get to shake his hand at the wedding. I thought after marrying TINA I'd get to connect with you two. I hate I missed my chance.

DENISE

I don't understand it.

WILLIAM

It's probably a generous gift to the church.

DENISE

Greg did not talked much about you or church.

WILLIAM

By the way, I'm sorry TINA could not make it. The salon is a madhouse.

DENISE

I know. I spoke with her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DENISE reaches under the chair to grab the gift but hesitates.

DENISE (CONT'D)
I never liked you.

WILLIAM is somewhat surprised by her candor.

DENISE (CONT'D)
I never envisioned Tina falling
for your type.

WILLIAM tries to diffuse the moment.

WILLIAM
What type, I'm practically an
angel.

Instead of laughing she gives a blank stare.

DENISE
Greg never spoke highly of you,
even after you became a minister.

WILLIAM
I went to school with him and I
always thought we were cool. We
went separate ways after. He was
super busy becoming a lawyer and I
guess I sowed my wild oats.

WILLIAM becomes visibly nervous. DENISE once again goes
to grab the gift from under the chair but fails.

DENISE
Everyone I have given gifts to so
far has been close friends or
family members.

WILLIAM
I understand. I don't have to take
anything.

DENISE becomes aloof and glances at her watch and phone.

DENISE
I will honor greg's wishes, let's
continue. I apologize.

She finally musters up the courage to reach under the
chair and put the gift on her lap.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DENISE (CONT'D)
(frustrated)
This could be it.

WILLIAM
(confused)
What do you mean?

DENISE
I mean his last gift.

WILLIAM nods and takes another sip of the drink.

DENISE (CONT'D)
Didn't think you'd receive the
last gift. I have yet to get a
gift from him.

DENISE is clenching the gift with everything in her.

DENISE (CONT'D)
The notes are nice. But this gift
is the hardest to let go. It's the
last one left for me to deliver.

Her grip lightens as she picks up and reads one of GREG'S
notes.

From GREG:

"My love grows daily, even in death I will never let you
go."

WILLIAM
We don't have to do this.

WILLIAM begins to loosen his shirt collar and swallow
hard.

DENISE leans over and gives the gift to WILLIAM.

WILLIAM grabs the gift with boyish excitement while
breaking out in a slight sweat.

Inside the box, he finds a deflated football.

WILLIAM chuckles.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Is this some type of joke?

DENISE looks confused.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

WILLIAM reads the accompanying note. His demeanor changes abruptly.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

(angry)

All this crap is in the past.

WILLIAM adamantly puts the box and paper on the table next to the drink and drinks a large gulp. He begins looking away from her fully disengaged.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

You must have lied about this being non-alcoholic whiskey.

DENISE picks up the notes and reads the contents.

DENISE

Is this true?

WILLIAM

No.

(beat)

None of us should have been there.

DENISE

He wanted to play in the league.
You took that away.

WILLIAM

I didn't take anything from anyone.

DENISE

Greg did prison time after that.
He got kicked off the football team. His dream was to play for the Falcons.

(beat)

All for because you said he was dealing drugs.

WILLIAM

That was an anonymous tip. He went on to become a lawyer. Happy ending. I don't get why he'd even drum up the past.

DENISE

It seems you moved on from the past.

(beat)

But the past is not done with you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

WILLIAM

Greg did not have to come to the party.

DENISE

So because he was there, he deserved to have his life ruined?

WILLIAM

No. You are twisting my words. When the police came we all panicked.

DENISE slowly closes her eyes.

INT. SECOND FLOOR PLAYROOM - DAY - IMAGINATION

She jumps from her chair and begins choking WILLIAM in a fit of rage.

INT. SECOND FLOOR PLAYROOM - DAY - BACK TO THE PRESENT

DENISE opens her eyes.

DENISE

I am so angry, I'm alone to deal with this, and nothing else matters, he's not here. I'm alone, no matter what.

WILLIAM is flustered and he's sweating more.

WILLIAM

I am truly sorry for your loss, but I did not do what he alleges.

DENISE

Your brother, Rick played professionally?

WILLIAM

Yes. That's beside the point.

DENISE

How so.

WILLIAM

My brother worked his butt off to get where he got.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DENISE

You took that away from GREG,
admit it.

WILLIAM

I DID NOTHING WRONG!

WILLIAM, angry, grabs the deflated football and
forcefully throws it into the wall.

Looking down in the box and he see's a note.

From GREG:

"I hope you enjoy your final drink."

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

What have you done?

DENISE reads over at the note. It's apparent there is
something in the drink.

DENISE

I did nothing to you.

WILLIAM

What do you want from me? We were
young. Our dad was a preacher. We
could not get caught up in that
stuff.

(beat)

Please call an ambulance. Do you
really think the police will
believe your dead husband poisoned
me?

DENISE is emotionless.

DENISE

How can you live with yourself?

WILLIAM

I guess that's why I became a
preacher. To make up for the
wrongs.

(beat)

Greg was no angel.

DENISE

Shut up. This is about you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILLIAM

After his affair with Tina, I'm
surprised you stayed with him to
see his death.

DENISE has the air stomped from her lungs.

DENISE

YOU ARE LYING.

WILLIAM regrets making that revelation known in his
current state.

WILLIAM

(respectfully)

Tina told me before we married. I
was sure you all worked through
it.

DENISE looks longingly at the poisonous bottle of
whiskey.

DENISE picks up the bottle and opens it. TINA calls her
phone and she lets it go to voicemail while only glancing
at it.

DENISE slowly closes her eyes.

INT. SECOND FLOOR PLAYROOM - DAY - IMAGINATION

DENISE chugs all the poisonous whiskey and begins foaming
at the mouth.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. SECOND FLOOR PLAYROOM - DAY - BACK TO THE PRESENT

DENISE opens her eyes.

DENISE

What's the point.

WILLIAM

NO! Stop it. You have a son that
can't lose you too.

WILLIAM falls out of the chair to the ground as the
effects of the drink begin to get worse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DENISE puts the drink down. She picks up the note she read earlier and aggressively crumbles it up and throws it to the ground.

She then rushes to call 911, requesting an ambulance immediately. She checks WILLIAM'S vitals to find he is unconscious but alive.

We see her pick up the phone and make a call which goes straight to voicemail.

"You've reached Greg Robson please leave a message."

DENISE

I was completely devoted to you. I didn't care that I sacrificed being a nurse for your career. The perpetual late nights at the office and odd business trips. I constantly praised you as a father and husband. I would have gladly died in your place.

(beat)

I gave you my all and you stomped on my heart.

She is just about to hang up the phone when the doorbell rings.

INT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

DENISE is standing after opening the door. At the door is another gift which says to TINA from GREG.

We see her slowly closes her eyes and shortly after she defiantly slams the door then we zoom out from the home while the sound of an incoming ambulance is heard.

FADE TO BLACK.